



# COLLIER HERITAGE FOUNDATION

DISSEMINATING COLLIER FAMILY GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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## Searching for the Grave of Efford Cobb Collier

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Possible Grave of Efford Cobb Collier, within the iron fence Douglassville Cemetery, Douglassville, Texas.

## Background

Efford Cobb Collier, son of Robert Collier and grandson of Vines Collier, was born May 4, 1811 in Upson County, Georgia. He died April 26, 1967 in Douglassville, Texas. He married Elizabeth singleton Harris on November 13, 1834 in Talbot County, Georgia. Elizabeth was born November 24, 1820 and died January 18, 1873 in Bryan, Brazos County, Texas.

The promise of abundant, cheap land in Texas has long enticed settlers, particularly following its annexation by the United States in 1845. In the late 1850s, several families from The Rock in Upson County, Georgia formed a wagon train bound for Texas.

From the files of Jean Cuthbert Collier (dated sometime before December 23, 1923:

*"Facts regarding Efford Cobb Collier that removed to Texas from Upson County, Georgia in 1857.*

*Efford Cobb Collier was the son of Robert Collier and brother of Robert Marshall Collier. It is said that Efford Cobb Collier removed to Texas with a lot of his neighbors, who were, Roswell Powell and James McCoy. It is said that Efford Cobb Collier had the following children: a son William Vines Collier, one daughter named Fannie and one daughter named Sarah and he resided on what is now known as the old Haygood place in Upson County Georgia, 3 or 4 miles South of The Rock and that his daughter Fannie married Hardy Jackson being his second wife and his daughter Sarah married James Jackson who was the son of Hardy.*

*I am now endeavoring to secure information from Douglassville Texas, Cass County, where Efford Cobb Collier is said to have moved in the year 1857.*

*J. C. Collier"*

J.C. contacted several of his Texas kin through the mail and eventually made trips to Texas to meet descendants of his great uncle, Efford Cobb Collier. He found no Colliers in Douglassville, Texas, however. Following Efford's death in 1867, the family moved to the Central Texas area.

In a letter dated September 3, 1940 to Mrs. I. H. Pressler (granddaughter of Efford Cobb Collier) in Florence, Texas, J.C. stated

*"My father, as you know, was born in Upson County, Ga., and I guess I am the one that found your grandfather's grave over in Douglassville, Texas, Cass County. When I was searching for his grave I ran across the Greene's on my grandmother's side who was also born in Thomaston, Upson County, Ga."*

J. C. must have been pointed to Efford's grave by a knowledgeable local person, which was entirely possible in the mid-1920s. But a review of J. C.'s papers to date have revealed no description of the actual grave location. Then, in 2019, question was brought to the forefront

by Tom R. Collier, who had researched and identified the property owned by Efford. Was Efford buried on his farm?

CHF approached Brenda McCoy, historian of the McCoy family and of Douglassville. Based on her research, she believes she has identified the grave of Efford Cobb Collier. Here is the evidence and her conclusions.

My name is Brenda McCoy. I am a Great – Great Granddaughter of James H. McCoy, Sr. who brought his family to Douglassville, Cass Co., Texas from The Rock, Upson Co., Georgia with the Collier family and the Powell family. After retiring, I moved back to the Douglassville area where I had grown up.

Soon after my return, I received a call from Glen Collier of Nacogdoches, Texas. I had been referred to him by someone else...maybe the Mayor of Douglassville (population 214). Mr. Collier was looking for the burial location of Efford Cobb Collier, and he explained his role in helping the Collier family with maintaining records, etc. from years past. In the time following, we exchanged emails as I began the search for the burial location, and I started reading the Collier letters that he was putting online.

For me it was like sitting down and reading a newspaper with names and information going back and forth from The Rock to Douglassville! I knew of the Greene's and their home place here. I also knew of their relatives here. After reading some of the letters, I discovered for the first time that our McCoy family had come on the wagon train with the Colliers and the Powell's. There were just a few members of the Powell family left here when I was growing up. And, the Colliers had left.

In working on our family's genealogy, I have been to The Rock, Upson County, Georgia three or four times. Two cousins had worked on it for many years, and then I got involved, too. So when Glen Collier called, it was a wonderful opportunity to work on the information that the Collier family needed, and at the same time, to learn more about these three families. That also led into more investigation about other families that came here earlier.

(Note: A review of letters written by Mr. Jena Cuthbert Collier, indicated that he had begun his search for more information about Efford Cobb Collier and the members of Efford's family in 1912. It seemed that the overriding question over time became "Where is Efford buried"? Mr. J. C. Collier had begun putting the genealogy of the Collier family together. It appears from his correspondence that he worked on this for the remainder of his life.)

Here are portions of some of the relevant correspondence that assisted Ms. McCoy's research:

- Dec. 20, 1923 Jena Cuthbert Collier (J. C. C.) wrote Mrs. Mary Greene Wilson (a cousin on his mother's side) who lived in Douglassville, Cass County, Texas. In this letter he informs her that he has sent out letters to various towns trying to locate the

family of Efford Cobb Collier.

- Jan. 20, 1924 Hardy R. Collier of Goldthwaite, Texas writes to J. C. Collier that there is a difference in dates of birth and death as it shows in his Grandpa's Bible and other information shared by J. C. Collier. On page 2 of the letter, he also states that Mrs. Fannie Jackson had said that Grandpa Efford Cobb Collier is buried at Douglassville, Cass Co., Texas. (Fannie Jackson was the daughter of Efford and Elizabeth Collier. Fannie married Hardy Ransom Jackson.)
- Sep. 16, 1925 In Jena Cuthbert Collier's letter to Mrs. Mary Greene Wilson, Douglassville, Texas, he states in the sixth paragraph:

*"When I come to Texas I will have to go to Douglassville, and I want to find if possible the grave of Efford Cobb Collier..."*

Sep. 28, 1926 Jena Cuthbert Collier wrote Mrs. Mary Greene Wilson in Douglassville, Texas and stated in the first paragraph "...*The flu has been very hard to get rid of. I still have a slight trouble in my throat and at times I ache awfully caused by the flu I contracted at Waco last fall.*"

The previous information gives us a clearer idea of when he visited in Douglassville, Texas.

Note: J.C. Collier continued his correspondence in between dates that I have used in sharing selections with you. Those years also included many references to the Great Depression, to business, and to farming and prices regarding such.

Sept. 3, 1940 Jena Cuthbert Collier wrote a letter to Mrs. I. H. Pressler in Florence, Texas. He stated that he regretted not getting to know her personally, but when he was last in Texas and at Waco, he had a case of the flu. It was then impossible for him to get down to Florence. In his closing paragraph he states:

"My father, as you know, was born in Upson County, Ga., and I guess I am the one that found your grandfather's grave over in Douglasville, Texas, Cass County. When I was searching for his grave I ran across the Greene's on my grandmother's side who was also born in Thomaston, Upson County, Ga."

Sep. 29, 1942 Jena Cuthbert Collier wrote a letter to Dr. J. D. Eggleston in Hampden-Sydney, Va. In the second paragraph, J. C. Collier refers to his great-grandmother, Martha Marshall Booker. Mid-way in the paragraph, he states:

"One son, Efford Cobb drifted to Texas in 1856\*, he is buried at Douglasville, Texas, and my inquiries found his grave, his people had scattered all over the state of Texas and I visited several of them on my last trip in Nov. 1926..."

\*Note: From all other accounts the move to Texas was in 1857.





Some of the Greene family graves JC Collier found in the Douglassville Cemetery. Possible grave of Efford Cobb Collier enclosed by iron fence in background.

On Jan. 30, 1866 Efford Cobb Collier deeded personal property to his wife and children. The personal property included his farm.

More from Brenda McCoy:

Since Efford's health must have been bad when he deeded his property to his wife and children on Jan. 30, 1866, he probably knew that he wouldn't live too long. His oldest son had been his "overseerer" for his farm before the Civil War, but he was killed in the War in Mississippi. I have wondered if Efford and the family had made plans for the family to go to the area around Bryan maybe after he died. Who knows for sure? A lot of the families here did have some married children to go to the areas around Dallas, down to Waco, and to the Bryan area, etc. after the War. (The Cole family here went to Bryan.) As for burial, I just don't think that they would have buried Efford on land that they knew would go back to Josiah J. Williams or would be sold.

So...I started thinking about the Douglassville Cemetery, and in particular, one burial site with an iron fence around it but no gravestone for it. I went there and took a shovel and tapped in the ground hoping to find a gravestone that might have fallen over some years ago. No luck. (And, I have the notebooks from two women who had kept records of those buried in D'ville from years ago until they had each died. By then the Cass Co. Genealogical Society had "read" all known cemeteries in the county and published the books.) (Also, no one who died during the Reconstruction Period here had a real marker

unless it was homemade of concrete – which there were a few. Some families put “real” ones on the graves at later times when they could get them. But, in learning a little about the Efford C. Collier family, and knowing about the correspondence between the Greene’s and others from GA to TX, and knowing where this grave with an old iron fence around it is, certainly tells me that it is likely Efford’s. There is no way to know for sure, but I just can’t see the family burying him anywhere else. I do not think that he is buried in Powell Cemetery #1. It is not **in** Douglassville. And, there are no Greene family members buried in it. He could perhaps be in another plot nearby in the D’ville Cemetery in an unmarked grave, but I still think that he is buried within this iron fence. There is no gate to it, and it is only large enough for one person to have been buried. There would have been iron fencing available in this area of the country. There were no railroads anywhere around here until 1873. Getting a monument would have been very difficult – especially during the Reconstruction Period. One would have to be ordered from some other area of the country, and then it would have to be transported from that place to this area. Then it would have to be hauled by a wagon and placed in the proper location. While this was routine in earlier years, it might not have been possible during the Reconstruction Period after the Civil War. But, a nice fence around the grave would have kept the grave from being “lost” over years. I think that is what the family did.

Other evidence:

I also reviewed the Cass County Genealogical Society’s cemetery books of 1996 when they “read” every cemetery and copied every marker in Cass County, and there was no listing for Efford Cobb Collier.

I studied letters of the Collier family and found through them several references to Efford being buried **in** Douglassville...not **outside of** Douglassville, and not **near** Douglassville, but **in** Douglassville. There is only one cemetery in Douglassville, and it is only a short distance from the intersections of Hwy. 8 and Hwy. 77. Both the Methodist and Baptist churches are visible from the cemetery.

The oldest known marked grave in the Douglassville Cemetery is 29 Oct 1859. This is in the same area as the grave that has the fence around it which I believe is most likely Efford Cobb Collier’s. There is one other grave site enclosed with the same design of fence as the one that could be Efford’s, and it is in the same time period. Other older grave sites northeast of his also have fencing but of a different design. Iron fencing around graves was not uncommon in those earlier days.

I took a shovel and tried to locate any kind of marker on both the inside area and just outside of this site hoping to find something that would have a name or initials on it but found nothing. It is not uncommon for markers to fall over and then over a period of years to have dirt cover them or for grass to grow over them. That did not seem to be the case here.

Other Douglassville information of interest.

James Charles Blalock and Orinda Dortha Adelia Coleman (O. D. A.) lived at The Rock, Upson Co., GA and remained there. Below are some of their children and spouses who came to this area of Texas:

Nancy W. Blalock married our James H. McCoy (**Robert Collier** was the one who married them.)

Lucinda G. Blalock married Hardy Ransom Jackson; he married Martha Francis Collier (2) (In his Will, he left Martha \$1,500 in gold; his watch, and a horse.)

Eleanor D. Blalock married Roswell Powell

Dorothea Cordelia Blalock married Dr. James Madison Willis (Came here abt. 1855.)

Ransom Cole (1800 – 1887) came to Texas in 1850. His wife was Agatha Bostwick (1806 – 1854). They had nine children. They settled in the Douglassville area. Two of the boys, Jasper Newton Cole and Noah Benjamin Cole, went to Bryan, TX in 1867. Brother Mason D. Cole had a store in Douglassville from 1865 – 1869, and then he joined the brothers in Bryan later in 1869. The father, Ransom Cole, stayed on his farm in Douglassville until his later years, and then he joined family in Bryan, Texas where he died.

Ransom Cole and Hardy Ransom Jackson had a lot of acreage in the northeastern quadrant from Douglassville.





IN THE FOREGROUND IS THE CEMETERY MARKER FOR J. J. WILLIAMS. HE WAS THE POSTMASTER IN DOUGLASSVILLE AND IS THE ONE WHO SOLD EFFORD C. COLLIER LAND IN THE E. FRAZIER HEADRIGHT.

THANK YOU BRENDA MCCOY FOR YOUR RESEARCH AND SLEUTHING!





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